

# Torah Weekly

## PARSHAT TETZAVEH PARSHAT ZACHOR

2 - 8 Adar 5785  
2 - 8 March 2025

Torah: Exodus 27:20 - 30:10  
Zachor: Deut. 25:17-19  
Haftorah: Samuel I 15:1-34

PSALMS DAILY

### Psalms for our brethren in the Holy Land

*Psalms 117*

1. Praise the Lord, all nations, laud Him, all peoples.  
2. For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of the Lord is eternal. Hallelujah!

(Please say Chapter 20 daily)

SEFER HAMITZVOT

### Negative Mitzvah 64 Testing G-d

Once a prophet has been established as a true prophet - either through accurately forecasting the future on several occasions, or through the testimony of another established prophet - it is forbidden to further test or doubt his words.

### Positive Mitzvah 206 Loving Our Fellow

We are commanded to love and care for our fellow Jew as we love and care for ourselves. We should treasure our fellow and his possessions as we treasure our own.

### Aleph Institute

*Hyman & Martha Rogal Center*

5804 Beacon Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

412-421-0111

Fax: 412-521-5948

www.AlephNE.org  
info@AlephNE.org



**ALEPH  
INSTITUTE**  
No One Alone,  
No One Forgotten.

## THE MENORAH'S DUAL MESSAGE

This week's Torah portion begins with the Mitzvah of kindling the Menorah in the Tabernacle (and eventually, the Holy Temple) every afternoon.

Light is a metaphor for the Torah, which sheds light in a world of darkness, illuminating it with G-dly wisdom. In a world where the divine truth is concealed, the Torah is a beacon of light which illuminates the path to a spiritual, meaningful and fulfilling life.

The Menorah is also a symbol of Jewish unity. Every Jewish soul is unique, possessing a distinctive nature and temperament. This is because each individual soul emanates from a unique combination of G-d's seven attributes: kindness, discipline, harmony, perseverance, humility, attachment and royalty. The seven branches of the golden Menorah symbolize the idea that, although we may express ourselves differently and possess different dispositions, we all share the same essence, an essence of pure gold. In fact, the Menorah wasn't a combination of parts which were screwed or even welded - together; rather, it was a single golden slab which was hammered into the shape of a Menorah. Not only are we all of the same substance, but we are actually a part of a single non-composite entity, one large Menorah.

Why is the Menorah, a metaphor for the Torah, also the symbol of Jewish unity? There were many vessels in the Tabernacle; why, of all of them, was the Menorah chosen to depict the oneness of our nation? And if one were to argue that Jewish unity is contingent upon our adherence to the Torah, this too can be questioned: are we not intrinsically brothers and sisters, members of one nation? Why is our unity dependent on the Torah?

A similar question can be asked with regards to our relationship with G-d. The Zohar states that "three knots connect to each other: the Holy One, blessed be He; the Torah; and [the people of] Israel." This is to say that through connecting to the Torah, the Jew connects to G-d. This is puzzling, for in fact the bond between the Jew and the Creator precedes the existence of the Torah. This is evidenced by the fact that the Torah is replete with phrases such as "Speak to the children of Israel," "Command the children of Israel," etc. Obviously, the Torah was written as a guidebook for the Jewish

nation, which conceptually existed before the Torah. Why, then, is it necessary for the Jew to connect to G-d through the Torah, if we enjoyed a relationship with Him before the Torah was even conceptualized?!

The Chassidic masters explain that, though the Jewish soul always enjoyed an intimate relationship with G-d, this relationship is concealed when the soul descends into the human body. Instead of yearning to develop the soul's relationship with G-d, the person is naturally consumed by the pursuit of materialism. Just as it is impossible to tune in to an AM broadcast with an FM radio, so too the spiritual voice of the soul cannot be heard by one who is tuned in only to materialistic radio waves. The Torah, which as mentioned above is likened to light, exposes the soul and its G-dly nature. A person who studies Torah becomes aware of the triviality of physical pursuits; becomes involved in a holy, spiritual world; and reveals his soul and connects to it. Studying Torah doesn't create a connection with G-d; it merely removes the layers which have obscured it.

The same can be said regarding Jewish unity. True love for another Jew can be felt only by one who is in tune with his soul. As Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi writes: "The [souls] all have one Father, and it is on account of this common root in the One G-d that all of Israel are called 'brothers' - in the full sense of the word. Only the bodies are distinct from each other. Therefore, there can be no true love and fraternity between those who regard their bodies as primary and their souls secondary, but only a love based on an external factor."

The lesson of the Menorah is that true Jewish unity, a unity which stems from the soul, is a result of the illumination provided by the study of Torah.

*By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg  
Jewish Learning Institute*

## THE BENEFITS OF ANONIMITY

A few reasons why an author might choose to use a pseudonym:

- He's unsure whether the book will be successful, and doesn't want to risk ruining his name and reputation.
- The book divulges personal and sensitive information, and he doesn't want to walk down the street to meet the stares: "Oh, there goes the pathetic loser who was/did..."
- The work challenges some very powerful interests and the author would rather that they not know who he is...

ד"ר

Let me introduce you to a different anonymous writer: Moses.

He's the one who transcribed the Torah, hence the name "Five Books of Moses." Torah was his passion and love, his life and legacy. He spent 40 days and nights in heaven, learning Torah from G-d Himself.

He wanted to be part of it with all his heart.

But he was willing to give it all up for something dearer to him than the Torah - the Jewish people. The same people who, since the beginning of his leadership, spat him in the face time after time: "Why did you take us out of Egypt?" "Do you want us to die in the desert?" "We are starving!"

Yet, when this ungrateful stiff-necked people sinned with the golden calf, and G-d decided to wipe them out, Moses begged G-d to forgive His people. "And if You decide not to forgive them, please erase me from the book that You wrote!"

Moses was willing to say goodbye to his magnum opus, to erase his name from the history books, because he was a leader. A true leader.

In the end G-d forgave the Jewish people. But, in order to teach future generations the meaning of true leadership, Moses' name is not found in an entire section of the Torah, this week's reading of Tetzaveh.

Ironically, it was his quest for anonymity that gave him his unparalleled place of honor in the annals of history.

*Rabbi Levi Aultzon*

*Linksfield Senderwood Hebrew Cong.  
Johannesburg, South Africa*

## TETZAVEH IN A NUTSHELL

The name of the Parshah, "Tetzaveh," means "Command" and it is found in Exodus 27:20.

G-d tells Moses to receive from the children of Israel pure olive oil to feed the "everlasting flame" of the Menorah, which Aaron is to kindle each day, "from evening till morning."

The priestly garments, to be worn by the Kohanim (priests) while serving in the Sanctuary, are described. All kohanim wore: 1) the Ketonet - a full-length linen tunic; 2) Michnasayim - linen breeches; 3) Mitznefet or Migba'at - a linen turban; 4) Avnet - a long sash wound above the waist.

In addition, the Kohen Gadol (high priest) wore: 5) the Efod - an apron-like garment made of blue, purple, and red-dyed wool, linen and gold thread;

6) the Choshen - a breastplate containing twelve precious stones inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; 7) the Me'il - a cloak of blue wool, with gold bells and decorative pomegranates on its hem; 8) the Tzitz - a golden

plate worn on the forehead, bearing the inscription "Holy to G-d."

Tetzaveh also includes G-d's detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons - Nadav, Avihu, Elazar and Itamar - into the

priesthood, and for the making of the golden altar, on which the Ketoret (incense) was burned.

## IN JEWISH HISTORY

**Sunday, 2 Adar 5785 - 2 March 2025**

### **Agadir Earthquake (1960)**

Hundreds of Jews, including some students of the local Chabad Yeshivah, were among the thousands of victims to perish in a devastating earthquake that struck Agadir, Morocco on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Adar in 5720 (1960).

### **Passing of Rabbi Yomtov Algazi (1802)**

Rabbi Yomtov Algazi was the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem from 5333 (1773) until his passing on 2 Adar 5562 (1802).

**Monday, 3 Adar 5785 - 3 March 2025**

### **2nd Temple Completed (349 BCE)**

The joyous dedication of the second Holy Temple (Beit HaMikdash) on the site of the 1<sup>st</sup> Temple in Jerusalem, was celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Adar of the year 3412 (349 BCE), after four years of work.

The First Temple, built by King Solomon in 2927 (833 BCE), was destroyed by the Babylonians in 3337 (423 BCE). At that time, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied: "Thus says the L-rd: After seventy years for Babylon will I visit you... and return you to this place." In 3389 (371 BCE) the Persian emperor Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the Temple, but the construction was halted the next year when the Samaritans persuaded Cyrus to withdraw permission. Achashverosh II (of Purim fame) upheld the moratorium. Only in 3407 (353 BCE) - exactly 70 years after the destruction - did the building of the Temple resume, under Darius II.

### **Passing of Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe (1612)**

Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe served as the rabbi of numerous communities in Poland and Lithuania. Among his more well-known works are Levush Malchut, a halachic code following the order of Rabbi Jacob ben Asher's Arbaah Turim, and Levush HaOrah, a super-commentary to Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki's Torah commentary, "Rashi". Rabbi Mordechai served as the head of the "Council of Four Lands," the government-sanctioned Jewish organization entrusted with dealing with Jewish communal affairs in Poland. In addition to Talmud and Jewish law, Rabbi Mordechai was also well-versed in both Kabbalah and astronomy. He passed away on 3 Adar II 5372 (1612), in Posen, Poland.

**Tuesday, 4 Adar 5785 - 4 March 2025**

### **Maharam's Body Ransomed (1307)**

The tragic saga of the imprisonment of Rabbi Meir ben Baruch ("Maharam") of Rothenburg came to a close when his body was ransomed, 14 years after his death, by Alexander ben Shlomo (Susskind) Wimpfen. "Maharam" (4975?-5053, or 1215-1293) was the leading Torah authority in Germany, and authored thousands of Halachic responsa as well as the Tosaphot commentary of the Talmudic tractate Yoma. In 5043 (1283) he was imprisoned in the Ensisheim fortress and held for a huge ransom, but he forbade the Jewish community to pay it (based on the Talmudic ruling that exorbitant sums should not be paid to free captives, as this would encourage the taking of Jewish hostages for ransom). For many

years Maharam's disciple, Rabbi Shimon ben Tzadok, was allowed to visit him in his cell and recorded his teachings in a work called Tashbetz.

Even after the Maharam's passing in 5053 (1293), his body was not released for burial until it was ransomed by Rabbi Alexander, who was subsequently laid to rest at his side.

### **Roman Ghetto Abolished (1798)**

In 5315 (1555), Pope Paul IV segregated the Jews of Rome in a walled quarter surrounded by gates that were locked at night. The ghettoed Jews were then subjected to various forms of degradation as well as restrictions on their personal freedoms.

During the French Revolution, Italy was conquered by Napoleon Bonaparte. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of Adar 5558 (February 20, 1798) the Ghetto was legally abolished. It was, however, reinstated as soon as the Papacy regained control.

**Thursday, 6 Adar 5785 - 6 March 2025**

### **Moses Completes the Torah (1273 BCE)**

Moses completed the book of Deuteronomy, concluding his review of the Torah which he began several weeks earlier, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shevat. He then wrote down the completed Five Books of Moses, word for word, as dictated to him by G-d. This scroll of the Torah was put into the Holy Ark, next to the Tablets of Testimony.

### **First Print of Torah with Onkelos & Rashi (1482)**

The first edition of the Five Books of Moses (Torah) with the Targum Onkelos (Aramaic translation of the Torah) and the commentary of the famed commentator Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as Rashi, was published on this date in 5242 (1482). It was published in Bologna, Italy, by Joseph b. Abraham Caravita, who set up a printing-press in his own home.

**Friday, 7 Adar 5785 - 7 March 2025**

### **Moses' Birth & Passing (1393 and 1273 BCE)**

Moses was born in Egypt on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar of the year 2368 (1393 BCE) and passed away on his 120<sup>th</sup> birthday - 7 Adar, 2488 (1273 BCE).

### **The Spanish Inquisition (1481)**

The Inquisition was created in the twelfth century to find "Christian heretics" who would be punished or killed. Eventually, Jews too were open to such charges of heresy, simply for being Jewish; and torture was routinely used to extract "confessions." Over the years, the inquisition, which operated with Papal consent, spread to many countries.

In 5241 (1481) the Inquisition began to function in Spain to expose the secret Jews, known as the Anusim or Marranos. This Inquisition was anti-Jewish more than in any previous countries. The first public sentencing and burning alive of six Jewish men and one woman by the Spanish Inquisition was held on this date in Seville in Southern Spain.

Following the start of the Spanish Inquisition, many Jews fled Spain.

### **Passing of Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Luntschitz, "Kli Yakar" (1619)**

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Luntschitz was born in the year 5310 (1550) in Luntschitz, Poland. Rabbi Sholomo Efraim was a disciple of the famed Talmudist, Rabbi Sholomo Luria, author of the Yam Shel Shlomo, as well as the great Jewish Kabbalist and philosopher, Rabbi Judah Lowe, known as the "Maharal of Prague."

In the year 5364 (1604), after having first headed the yeshivah in Levov, he was appointed rabbi of Prague, replacing Rabbi Lowe, who was then quite elderly. He held the position until his passing.

He is the author of a number of works, but is best known for his works Kli Yakar (a commentary on the Torah) and Olelot Ephraim (a collection of sermons). He passed away on 7 Adar 5379. Among his prominent students was Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller, author of a classic commentary on the Mishnah called Tosfot Yom Tov.

### **Sinking of Struma (1942)**

On 22 Kislev 5702 (December 12, 1941), the Struma ship set sail from the port of Constanta, Romania, carrying 800 Jewish Romanian refugees headed for British Mandatory Palestine. The ship was detained at Istanbul, where British authorities refused to allow the ship to continue to its destination. On 6 Adar 5702 (February 23, 1942), Turkish authorities towed the ship out to the Black Sea, where it drifted aimlessly due to a failed engine. The next day, on 7 Adar, the ship was sunk by a Soviet submarine. Only one passenger survived the horrific disaster.

**Shabbat, 8 Adar 5785 - 8 March 2025**

### **Oath on Torah Permitted (1674)**

In the 5420's (1660's) the Jewish community of Barbados gained considerable importance. However, they had a decided disadvantage in that their testimony was not admissible in court due to their refusal to take an oath on a Christian Bible. In 5429 (1669), the Jewish community presented a petition requesting permission to take oaths on the Five Books of Moses, the Jewish Bible.

Several years later, on Wednesday, 8 Adar 5434 (14 February, 1674), Barbados passed a law granting the Jewish community the permission they requested.

### **Maryland Law Revoked (1825)**

In 5475 (1715), the Crown Colony of Maryland enacted a law requiring any citizen who wished to hold public office to take an oath of abjuration, which contained the words, "upon the true faith of a Christian." In 5476 (1776), the new constitution of the State of Maryland reaffirmed this law, requiring any oath of office to contain a declaration of belief in the Christian religion. In the decades that followed, the struggle to repeal this law attracted national attention. On 8 Adar 5485 (1825) an act "for the relief of the Jews in Maryland," was passed by Maryland's House of Delegates. The bill allowed every Jewish citizen to take an oath which professes his belief in a "future State of Rewards and Punishments, in the stead of the declaration now required by the Constitution and form of Government of this State."